

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2005

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.642.9121
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu

WORLD RENOWNED PIANISTS
EMANUEL AX & YEFIM BRONFMAN TOGETHER
AT CAL PERFORMANCES
SATURDAY, MARCH 26 AT 8:00 PM

PROGRAM FEATURES DUO PIANO WORKS BY STRAVINSKY, SCHUMANN, DEBUSSY, AND RAVEL

BERKELEY, February 22, 2005 – In an all too rare collaboration, two of classical music’s greatest pianists, **Emanuel Ax** and **Yefim Bronfman**, are teaming up to create an evening of music that is at once intimate and exhilarating at **Cal Performances Saturday, March 26 at 8:00 p.m.** A highlight of the performance—a program of works by **Stravinsky, Schumann, Debussy, and Ravel**, that evokes the creative fervor of early 20th-century Paris—is a two-piano arrangement of *The Rite of Spring*, transcribed by Stravinsky himself. The duo will also play *En Blanc et Noir*, one of Debussy’s last works and which Mr. Ax considers “one of the absolutely greatest pieces that Debussy ever wrote.” The second movement is a memorial to a family friend who was killed in the First World War. “It’s an incredibly evocative piece,” says Ax, “without in any way referring to specific events.” The program also features two of Ravel’s best-loved compositions, *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and *La Valse*, and an arrangement of Schumann's *Six Canonic Études* by Debussy.

Although Mr. Ax and Mr. Bronfman seldom have the opportunity to perform together, they are great friends. As Mr. Ax states in a recent conversation with Robert Cole, Director of Cal Performances, “We love working together.” The mutual admiration and warmth they display during their performances create a disarmingly relaxed and sometimes playful ambience. Says Mr. Ax, with typical self-effacing humor, “Fima (Bronfman’s nickname) loves to tell the audience that we always play a four-handed piece just to prove that we can actually sit at one piano.” Together, they combine their exceptional gifts and complementary styles to create sublimely beautiful music. “Their playing was so expressive and expansive, it filled the hall in ways that seemed inconceivable” the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* heralded. Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman have collaborated on one CD, the well-received *Rachmaninoff: Symphonic Dances and Suites for 2 Pianos*, released in 2002.

-MORE-

EMANUEL AX

Born in Lvov, Poland, **Emanuel Ax** moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family when he was a young boy. His studies at The Juilliard School with piano teacher Mieczylaw Munz were greatly supported by the sponsorship of the Epstein Scholarship Program of the Boys Clubs of America. Additionally, he attended Columbia University, where he majored in French. Mr. Ax first entered the public spotlight in 1974 at age 25, when he won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975, he received the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists and in 1979 won the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. Since then, he has become one of the most prominent pianists in the world.

His career includes appearances with major symphony orchestras worldwide, recitals in the most celebrated concert halls, and a variety of chamber music collaborations with such artists as Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, Peter Serkin and Jaime Laredo; he was a frequent collaborator with the late Isaac Stern.

Mr. Ax has been an exclusive Sony Classical recording artist since 1987, making his debut on the label with a collection of Chopin scherzos and mazurkas. His recent releases include the third in a series of Haydn Piano Sonatas; period-instrument performances of Chopin's complete works for piano and orchestra (on two discs); and the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 with Bernard Haitink and the Boston Symphony. Other notable recordings are a Grammy-award winning album of Haydn Piano Sonatas, the two Liszt concertos paired with the Schoenberg Concerto, three solo Brahms albums, and a series of acclaimed recordings with frequent collaborator Yo-Yo Ma, including the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano, for which they won three Grammy awards.

Ax has also recorded John Adams's *Century Rolls*, a piece written for him by Adams and for which he gave the world premiere with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1997. He subsequently performed the European premiere with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in 1998, and the New York premiere with the Cleveland Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in 2000. In recent years Mr. Ax has turned his attention toward the music of 20th-century composers, performing works by such

diverse figures as Sir Michael Tippett, Hans Werner Henze, Paul Hindemith, Ezra Laderman, Peter Lieberson, Joseph Schwantner, William Bolcom, André Previn and Aaron Copland.

YEFIM BRONFMAN

Yefim Bronfman's commanding technique and exceptional lyrical gifts have won him consistent critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences worldwide. He immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973 from Tashkent, in the Soviet Union. At the age of 15 he made his professional debut with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He later made his international debut with Zubin Mehta and the Montreal Symphony. His Washington, D.C. recital debut followed in 1981 at the Kennedy Center and his New York recital debut in 1982 at the 92nd Street Y. He, like Ax, is an Avery Fisher Prize recipient, having won that honor in 1991.

Mr. Bronfman has recently performed with the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Montreal and San Francisco, as well as with the Vienna Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam and the Lucerne Festival, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony (at Heinz Hall and Carnegie Hall). He also appeared with Mr. Ax at Carnegie's Zankel Hall, a performance that included artists of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Mr. Bronfman, an exclusive Sony Classical recording artist, won a Grammy award in 1997 for his recording of the three Bartók Piano Concertos with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His discography also includes the complete Prokofiev Piano Sonatas; all five of the Prokofiev Piano Concertos, nominated for both Grammy and Gramophone awards; Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3; recital albums featuring Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Stravinsky's *Three Scenes from Petrouchka*, Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons* paired with Balakirev's *Islamey*; and the Tchaikovsky and Arensky Piano Trios with Cho-Liang Lin and Gary Hoffman.

A devoted chamber music performer, Mr. Bronfman has collaborated with the Emerson, Cleveland, Guarneri and Juilliard quartets, as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln

Center. He has also played chamber music with Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Shlomo Mintz, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pinchas Zukerman and many other artists.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Emanuel Ax** and **Yefim Bronfman** for **Saturday, March 26** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at \$34.00, \$46.00 and \$62.00. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

###

The *San Francisco Chronicle* is a season sponsor of Cal Performances; *San Francisco* magazine and Classical 102.1 KDFC are season media sponsors of the 2004/05 performing arts season.

Cal Performances' 2004/2005 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

###

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, March 26 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Recital

Emanuel Ax & Yefim Bronfman, piano duo

Program:

Schumann/Six Canonic Études, Op. 56

Debussy/*En Blanc et Noir*

Ravel/*Rhapsodie Espagnole; La Valse*

Stravinsky/*The Rite of Spring*

Tickets: \$34.00, \$46.00, and \$62.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.